

# The Historic Old Missions of Texas



The Historic Alamo, Famous in the History of Texas—Built 1744

**Picturesque Franciscan Missions Which Are To Be Restored In Time for the Celebration of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the City of San Antonio.**

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WHEN one speaks of the old missions of the United States, those of California are supposed to be meant, yet wherever the Spanish explorer went and left settlements there you will find these monuments established through the heroism and self-sacrifice of the Spanish missionaries who founded and maintained these missions for the spread of the Christian religion.

Texas was first under Spanish control and later passed under the dominion of Mexico. In the southern or southwestern part of that great State may be found still existing evidences of the old Spanish rule and customs and not the least interesting of these are the Missions located a short distance from the delightful city of San Antonio. Because of the climate in this section the place of the Missions was known in the early days as the Valley of the Heart's Delight, and here the Franciscan Fathers came two hundred years ago with a Bible in one hand and a sword in the other, battling against heavy odds to establish the Christian religion in this wilderness. The climate was not unlike that of Mexico and the good fathers decided to establish their headquarters at San Antonio.

Their first mission was the Alamo.



San Jose Mission, Founded in 1719, Near San Antonio

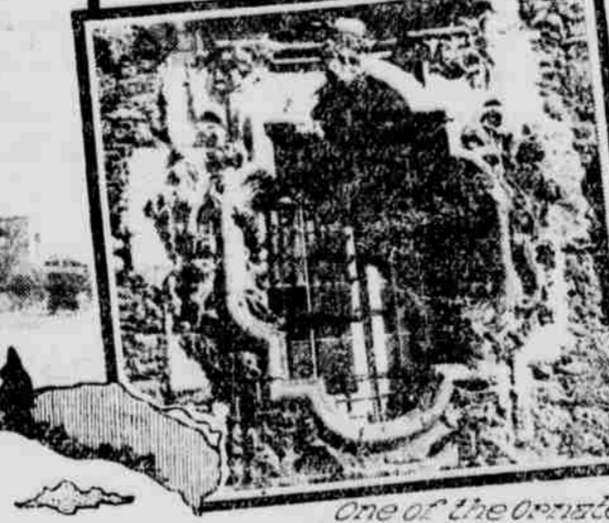
Now known in history because of its being buried in the blood of patriotic Texans during their struggle against Santa Anna in 1836. The horrors of the besieging of this handful of Texans who were in the Alamo by an army of from three to four thousand Mexicans and the brutal killing of Colonel James Bowie, who was at the time ill with typhoid fever, and one hundred and eighty-two others, is too well known to need repetition here, suffice to say that the Alamo is one of America's most venerated shrines for the heroism of these men ranks with that of Thermopylae and in the charge of Balaklava. This building stands in the heart of the city and is fairly well preserved. Visitors are shown the room in which Bowie was lying ill at the time of the fight and told how the Mexican soldiers raised him on their bayonets and carried him around the room while his life blood ran in streams over their shoulders, the great pillars behind which the Texans took refuge and fired at the Mexicans; the old doors with the marks of the sandbag barricades used and many other interesting things.

In the early days the building was known as the Mission San Antonio de Valero, and its erection is said to date back to 1716. It was not regarded by the Franciscans as their most successful mission nor is its architecture as graceful and picturesque as many of the others. It was the site of March 6, 1836, which makes it famous. The other Missions are different in many ways—they are larger and have finer carvings, but at present, with the exception of one, they are massive ruins.

Now comes the news that these sacred churches are to be restored as a complete rehabilitation of the edifices is a part of the program of the committee who is in charge of the celebration of San Antonio's two hundredth anniversary. Cardinal Gibbons has already expressed himself as in favor of the restoration, and recently in speaking of the Texas movement to this end, the eminent divine declared: "They honor themselves in honoring the memory of these men." These old ruined churches, while not as well known as those of "The King's Highway" of California, are quite as large and in one or two instances



The Roofless Chapel of the Capistrano Mission, Commenced in 1731



One of the Ornate Windows of the San Jose Mission

more beautiful than those of the Golden State.

**Vandalism.**

Like the Missions of California, they were built for protection, for seclusion and for worship. There the good priests gathered together the Indians and in addition to teaching them the religion of Jesus Christ, the arts of husbandry and useful trades; the scattered traveler and the hunter who were lost by the savage tribes. During the eighteenth century the Texas Missions were visited by many Spanish officials, but today they are silent and deserted, falling to decay and suffering from the vandalism of thoughtless tourists who have in some instances carried away whole statues and wrecked splendid old carved cedar doors by chopping off pieces of the wood. Besides this, hundreds of names have been scribbled on the walls, adding to the shameful desecration of some of the most magnifi-

cent and sacred relics of our land.

## Mission Concepcion.

The Mission Concepcion is the best preserved of all with the exception of the Alamo. The Concepcion was commenced in 1716 and completed in 1731. At first it was a simple structure of wood for the Indians knew nothing even of wood structure at that time, and when the priests assisted by the soldiers started to erect the first Mission the Indians crept up amazed in wonder at the work. Finally they asked permission to help and this was encouraged by the priests. The padres had little to offer as a wage, but the Indians were easily satisfied—a piece of red cloth, a few beads or a colored picture was eagerly accepted as a day's wage. Finally when the first church was finished and mass was said before the altar, the Indians listened in wonderment. Then they were eager to learn more of the Christ, so it came to pass that the good fathers taught them trades as well as religion as the great stone edifice will attest. Even in this present day the building of structures like the Concepcion would be no easy task without the aid of skilled labor and machinery. There everything had to be done by hand and without the assistance of machinery except of the most primitive kind. The Mission is built in the shape of a cross, with the towers forming two wings at the foot of the cross. In the rear is a big Moorish dome entirely different from the usual architecture of Missions, over the doorway are words which translated into English read—"With these arms be mindful of the Mission's Patroness and Princess, and defend (or vindicate) the state of her purity." Above this there is a knotted scourge of St. Francis carved into the stone. Each of the towers have bellies and at their bases are rooms about eleven feet square, the one on the right being used as a baptistry and one on the left as a vestry. The upper stories of the towers each have four lookout windows of plain Roman arches. The walls of the church are about four feet thick and in the early days were frescoed with red and blue with bits of yellow. This has nearly disappeared, yet the whole outer aspect of the church, rising as it does out of a wilderness of brush, fills one with a sense of delight. Inside, the stone roof of the chapel with its series of arches and central dome is massive but plain; its each wing of the cross are altar pieces, and in the west end is the choir loft. The east chapel has been partially restored and there is a figure of Our Lady of Lourdes back of the altar. After its restoration in 1887 the chapel was rededicated to this particular saint. There are cells, cloisters, and many chambers in the Mission proper, but these have fallen to decay and are the home of bats and owls. About the middle of the eighteenth century the Mission Square enclosed about four acres, while the brothers of the Mission



Mission Concepcion, Near San Antonio, Erected in 1716-1730

owned about one hundred acres outside.

During the fight for the independence of Texas the Mission was used for the quartering of troops. This was in 1835, and again in 1849 after the Mexican war.

## San Jose.

The Mission of San Jose, familiarly known as the Second Mission, was founded in 1715. It is the most beautiful of all on account of the exquisite carvings on the facade, its Moorish outlines and its classic windows. The draperies of the figures of the Virgin and Saints chiseled in stone are done with such skill as to resemble the filmy lace of a bridal veil. There are Sacred Hearts, cherub heads, couch-like canopies and wonderful cornices. The greater part of the carving is the work of the Spanish artist Huber, who devoted many of the best years of his life to the work. The lines of the Mission are a joy forever to the lover of art and its windows with their graceful curves and beautiful carvings are in exquisite taste. The south window of the baptistry is considered by art connoisseurs as "the finest gem of architectural ornamentation existing in America today." Unfortunately even this has not escaped the vandals. A part of the Chapel still stands and has been decorated in gaudy style by the Mexican women who live nearby. Two or three old dust-covered pictures said to be scenes from the life of St. Joseph hang on the wall.

In 1859 several Benedictine Fathers from Pittsburgh came to the Mission for the purpose of restoring it, but before much had been accomplished the Civil War came on and the project was abandoned.

## Capistrano.

The Mission San Juan Capistrano is named in honor of Santa Giovanni di Capistrano, a friar of the Franciscan order. It is now a moss-covered ruin.

Typically Spanish in construction, it stands out like some ancient ruin of sunny Spain. Even the roof of the Chapel is gone and the frescoes have been ruined by the rain. At the south end there is a small society where a few of the statues and bric-a-brac of the old days are preserved. The pillars and columns show a decidedly Moorish taste in both shape and coloring. Curious figures of boys playing on musical instruments are carved over the doors—one, a violin player, is the best preserved, being frescoed in color. The Mission has a tower, and in the middle arch there was a bell. The structure dates back to 1731.

## Esparada.

The Mission San Francisco de la Esparada was commenced in 1715 and completed in 1730, and dedicated to St. Francis, the founder of the Franciscans, called Esparada or sword. Tradition tells us that the old tower of the Chapel was built in the form of a bit of a sword and that the imagination of the founders supplied length to the blade to complete the similarity to the whole weapon. This Mission is the least attractive of them all and seems to have been a sort of fortress as there are holes for both cannon and muskets in the walls. The parts which have been restored show Moorish shapes and lines, although in no way compares with the San Jose Mission. Mexican families live in dilapidated huts near the Mission Square—a place made historic from the fact that this spot was the first camping ground of the Texan Army of Independence, and it was here that Stephen F. Austin joined the troops as commander-in-chief upon his escape from Mexico. All the Missions had large granaries and other food storerooms. The walls of these buildings were several feet in thickness and so well constructed that it is almost impossible to pull them down.

# Alloy! Naval Specialists



The Making of the Mechanical Experts of the U.S. Navy

**Experts All, Aboard Our Warships, Instead of the Jacks-of-All-Trades of Former Years -- Tars That Know One Thing and Know It Well -- Uncle Sam's School for Specialists.**

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ONE gone for all time is your jolly naval tar who was in the old days a jack-of-all-trades, who could do carpentering as well as he could splice a rope and who could solder a pan as readily as he could furl a sail. The versatile sailor man of yore has been succeeded—at least upon our warships—by the naval specialist. It is a most important phase of preparedness, it is thought, without a phase that was inaugurated without waiting for the present European war to disclose its need.

Seamen—able seamen they always are in stories—are about as scarce these days on a highly organized floating fortress as unskilled laborers are in an automobile plant. The modern warship has no sails and there are ingenious burden bearers for doing the heavy work such as hoisting aboard ammunition and lowering away boats, so that you see there is really small need for the old-time handy man who sailed before the mast. But in her new status of a gigantic machine shop, the modern battleship has need of no end of men who know how to manipulate metals; who can quickly repair any mechanical device and who know as much about the range current and liquid fuel and compressed air and internal combustion engines as the old-time tar did about wind and wave and the wayward topmast. Hence, exit the hero of the clipper ship; enter the skilled artisan who has his work bench below the water-line.

## Opportunities of This Era.

But don't get the idea that because Uncle Sam requires all these cunning craftsmen to keep the wheels turning in his new dreadnaughts he is in the habit of going into the open field of industry and saying to the butcher, the baker and the candlestick-maker: "You must give me your best men, because I need them in my business of preparing for war." Not a bit of it. On the contrary, Uncle Sam is training his naval specialists. And just here is found the explanation of why this new era of naval specialization is an

era of opportunity for America's young men.

Turning the United States navy into a great free technical school is the principal reason why desertions are few in number in the Navy these days and why it is that the Navy is now recruited up to its full strength with a "waiting list" that will make a rush to get in if Congress gives the expected word to enroll ten thousand more men.

Free technical school, did we say, too? Well I should say so, and then some. "Pretty soft," many a young man is tempted to say when a young man finds that he can not only be taught an electrical or engineering profession free of charge, but that a kindly somebody is actually going to pay him for his time while he is learning. That is precisely the situation though, in our Navy. Uncle Sam not only provides his apprentices with board, lodging, clothing, medical attendance and a certain amount of free amusement, but he goes a step farther and pays them a comfortable wage.

## Uncle Sam, Technical Schoolmaster.

It is one of the really big things of the age, the work Uncle Sam is doing in coaching the mechanical and electrical specialists of our new navy. It should perhaps, however, be emphasized just here that the Government has no enthusiasm for the idea of attempting to make experts out of absolutely green material.

The officials realize that most of the young men who are saving and hammering and soldering and installing electrical conduits aboard a battleship are not the Stars and Stripes have not taken up the naval vocation as a life work. They expect them to return to civil life after a time, and they are well content to proceed on that basis, but perhaps for that very reason the naval authorities do not undertake to make a specialist out of a recruit unless he has had some little experience in the trade he inclines to take up, or at least displays exceptional aptitude in

that direction.

If a newcomer in the navy does qualify he is detailed for a course of instruction at one or another of the technical schools which have been established by the Navy Department—a system of schools which proves how thoroughly Uncle Sam has gone into this very important sort of preparedness. Any electrician by trade who can pass the examination for entrance to the Navy as a "general electrician" can have a course of instruction at one or the other of the Navy electrical schools, located at Brooklyn, N. Y., and Mare Island, Cal., and if he knows the Morse code and has a smattering of knowledge of telegraphy there is no reason why the new recruit should not, if he chooses, specialize in radio work—work that is mighty profitable in this wireless age.

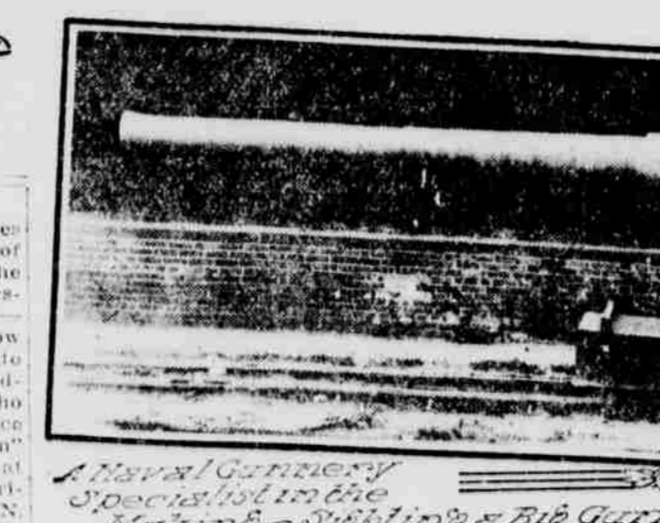
Or, if a young man expects to make his livelihood in the building trades or as a building contractor and has the good sense to know that his best start is under the guidance of Uncle Sam he can attend the Navy Artificer School at Norfolk, Virginia, where he will spend from three to six months learning to be a carpenter, a blacksmith, a painter or a plumber. Of course, Uncle Sam teaches the respective trades with an eye, always to the work to be performed on shipboard. The younger carpenter doesn't spend any time learning how to build picket fences, but he does spend time learning how to caulk seams in wooden decks and how to repair bolts, spars and masts. The naval blacksmiths in the making give much attention to chocking and unchocking chains; the painters learn how to paint ships, etc.

## Homely Pursuits of Some Naval Specialists.

Here we have been chatting as



A Blacksmith Shop on Board a U.S. Warship



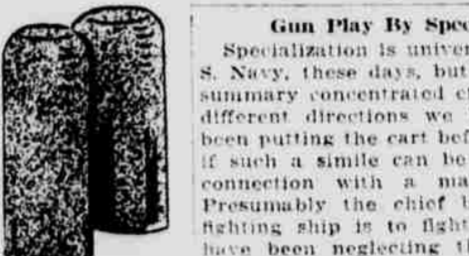
A Naval Gunner's Specialist in the Making—Sighting a Big Gun

though the specialists that now make up the majority of the 1900 men on a modern battleship were all mechanics and electricians and the like, when, as a matter of fact, there are others who are worthy of their hire for all that they have nothing to do, directly, with keeping the ship and its intricate mechanism in fighting trim. A ship might be compared to a big manufactory; the machine shop is important but so is the office. Following that train of thought, we might go down into the bowels of the armor-plated and find at work over books and typewriters a group of men that the average citizen never associates with warship routine. These naval specialists are known as men of the Yeoman branch, but in civil life we would speak of them as clerks and stenographers, correspondents, accountants and paymasters. Alike to the other naval specialists they qualify for their duties at special schools located at Newport, Rhode Island, and San Francisco, Cal.

Then there are the men of the Hospital corps who are specialists if there



Electrical Specialist Telephoning on Battleship



Gun Play By Specialists.

Specialization is universal in the U. S. Navy, these days, but in this brief summary concentrated effort in many different directions we have, I fear, been putting the cart before the horse if such a simile can be employed in connection with a maritime topic. Presumably the chief business of a fighting ship is to fight and yet we have been neglecting that phase of

the subject. But never fear, the theory of specialization holds good here, too. If there ever were specialists worthy the name they are the mighty gunners who point and fire the big batteries of the battleship fleet. For nerve and skill and precision, your diamond-cutter nor your steeple-jack nor yet your military acrobat has behind him the gunner who stands behind the guns in the battleship turret and whose trigger fingers must be trained to make due allowance for the rolling and pitching of the ship that serves as a portable gun platform.

In gunnery of all pursuits it would appear that the way to learn to do a thing is to do it. Well, Uncle Sam subscribes to that theory, as witness the time and ammunition expended every year in naval target practice. But on top of that the Government maintains a technical school for gunners just as there are provided, as has been explained, technical schools for the grooming of naval electricians and machinists and artisans. The School for Seamen Gunners is located at Washington, D. C., in order that our marksmen in the making may



Culinary Specialists in the Navy—Cooks and Helpers Preparing Dinner

have an opportunity to pursue their practical studies in the great Naval Gun Factory where the shooting irons for our warships are manufactured.

## Learning From the Inside Out.

It is not the mere theory of gunnery that our premier naval specialists learn during this six months in the gun shops. They learn the construction of the guns that they are later to clean and repair and fire and they learn it from the inside out not from the outside in, as do so many modern repair men in all lines. To appreciate the force of the logic that applies in this matter of gunnery just ask a dozen motorists who they prefer to have time around the cars when adjustments are necessary. Eleven out of the twelve will express a strong preference for the factory-trained mechanic who "knows the car" as no one can but a man who has had experience in building and assembling its various parts.

Precisely the same thing holds good of gunners in the U. S. Navy. The worth of a \$10,000,000 dreadnaught depends on the efficiency of her gun crews. To make sure of that efficiency and to make that efficiency well grounded the picked men chosen to handle the big guns are not allowed to take posts of responsibility until they have spent half a year on probation "in the factory." Here they take a hand in the making of guns of all calibers; they grow accustomed to taking down and reassembling the most delicately adjusted pieces of naval ordnance; and they gain an intimate knowledge of ammunition, rounding out their schooling with a post-graduate course at the nation's big smokeless powder factory at Indian Head, Maryland.

When a gunnery specialist has been "through the mill" nothing about a big gun, not even the intricate breech mechanism has any terrors for him. He has the whole subject at his finger tips, and he needs it, for upon him and his fellows devolves the task of keeping the guns aboard ship in repair. If, during target practice, a spring or a bit of mechanism breaks, these factory-trained specialists must be able to go into the ship's shops and force, flush and install a new piece. Other naval specialists might be enumerated, but these are the principal ones. In conclusion, however, a passing word of recognition should be given to the torpedo specialists of the Navy—like the gunners, factory trained. Torpedoes will play an important part in the next war, as they have in the present, and it is comforting to know that the Navy has men who specialize with respect to these cigar-shaped messengers of destruction, even as other men specialize on submarines.